

# SECTION IV -- WHAT THE COLLEGE OF HERALDS DOES

## 3) The Various Types of SCA Herald (August, XXI)

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Abstract: A brief description of the types of heraldry practiced in the SCA, and the basic skills needed for each.

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## THE VARIOUS TYPES OF SCA HERALD

Eilis O'Boirne (August XXI)

Heraldry as practiced in the SCA falls into several categories. These can be broadly divided into "voice" and "book", and each of these categories can be divided into several subsections. Although few heralds are expert in all these aspects, most do practice more than one of them. This is a brief description of these types of heraldry, along with the basic skills needed for each.

### VOICE HERALDRY

All voice heraldry requires an ability to project your voice and a certain amount of physical stamina. Specific activities and their requirements are:

**Field:** The field herald is the one who announces fights in the Lists, does arming calls, and generally works with the Mistress of the Lists and the Marshals to help combat run smoothly. This requires a strong voice (with the exact strength dependant on the size of the field and the length of the Lists), some ability to sight-read unfamiliar names, and a familiarity with the Litany used to announce combats.

**Duty:** The duty herald is the one who makes all the announcements which are not directly connected with the running of the Lists or other combat. He is usually stationed at a central location, like the heralds' point or the Royal Pavilion, and must remain visible from the field when not actually making an announcement around the camp. This job does not require as strong a voice as field heraldry, since the announcements can generally be made several times around the camp. It does require a certain amount of discrimination, since many different people will be asking you to make announcements for them. (See the section on "Field and Duty" for further details on these.)

**Court:** The Court Herald is responsible for organizing and (subtly) directing the Court to which he is assigned. This post requires the strong voice and ability to sight-read of the field herald, the discrimination of the duty herald, familiarity with the ceremonies, an ability to read the calligraphic hands used on scrolls, and a certain amount of showmanship. A herald who wishes to learn Court heraldry will usually be assigned as a "second" or assistant to a trained Court herald. (See the section on "Court" for further information.)

### BOOK HERALDRY

All book heraldry requires literacy, and most of it requires familiarity with the "heraldic language" of blazon. This language can be learned from books on mundane heraldry or from SCA sources. Specific activities and their requirements are:

**Research:** This is the "look it up and see if it conflicts" part of the job. It requires familiarity with the research tools, especially with the SCA Ordinary, and with the Rules of Submission. It is also helpful to be able to visualize armory from a blazon. (This is the aspect most exercised at the monthly Sunday meetings and weekly Brachet meetings.)

**Consultation:** This is the process of actively helping a submitter choose his name and armory. It requires familiarity with naming and heraldic practices and with medieval design theories, and a working knowledge of the Rules for Submission. It helps to have good communication skills and an ability to sketch.

**Ceremony:** Although it is not very visible, one of the aspects of heraldry is designing ceremony for use in Court. This ceremony can range from the creation of a Principality or Kingdom to a simple award presentation. For this, it helps to have an ear for language, an extensive reading background, and a thorough grounding in what the SCA is all about.

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